

Series I
Correspondence,
1932-1973

Box 1, Folder 36

Sept. 17, 1946 -
Dec. 10, 1946

Frame: 1101

Outgoing, 1946-1947

Not particularly important. General interest on matters of promotion and problems of battle analysis. Also general comments on work of War College.

A few good notes on Newport affairs.

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17 September 1946

Dear "Soc":

It was very pleasant to see you in Philadelphia the other day and to be on board your Flagship, the Oregon City. I appreciated being invited to luncheon and I enjoyed meeting your Staff and being on shipboard once more.

I appreciated the very friendly counsel you gave me and I most certainly will do everything that you suggested. Very frankly, your counsel to me was exactly what I had already decided for myself, so it was pleasing for me to note that my own analysis met with your evident approval.

I hear rumors that you are about to go to the General Board, but whether this is so or not I do not know. In a way I hope that it is so because I wish to see the General Board revitalized with outstanding officers, and also because I want you to have a chance to rest after your arduous duties not only in the Pacific, but also in the more recent Atlantic. Then, I hope, in a year or so, you will be ready to assume one of the ultra high commands of the Navy for which you are so eminently fitted.

I have reported in here for duty, and I find that I am going to enjoy this assignment as much as I had hoped. The Japanese translations are gradually coming in and I feel that it will be highly interesting to investigate the various naval battles from both sides. I hope that our results will be found of great value to the Fleet and to the Country.

I find that the War College is progressing most favorably, everyone is working hard, and the atmosphere is exhilarating. All hands have the utmost admiration for Admiral Spruance and his high professional ability gives the College an added luster. The local people sing his praises everywhere.

The Admiral has been invited by the British to make an address before the Royal United Service Institution in London on 30 October so he is working on his address now. I'm glad to see him getting world recognition at last!

With warmest personal regards to yourself and with hopes that you will remember me most kindly to Betty, for whom I have always had a most friendly affection, I am, as ever,

Your Old Friend,

R.W. Bates
Commodore, U.S.N.

Vice Admiral C.H. McMorris
Commander 4th Fleet
c/o Fleet Post Office
New York City, N.Y.

1105

17 September 1946

Dear Reggie:

This is to tell you of how sorry I am that during the major portion of my stay in Philadelphia both you and Elsa were ill. It was too bad! However, I hope that, by now, you are fully recovered and have found that your stay in the hospital gave you a rest, long since needed. You give so much of yourself to everything that you do, that a rest, on occasions, is warranted and should be taken.

I also hope that your beloved Elsa is fully recovered. I had a very pleasant talk with her one day while she was ill and I found her to be the same charming person that I have known for so long. I shall look forward to seeing you both again at the earliest possible moment, and when that happens I hope that fortune will smile a little more on me and let me have both of you to myself.

It was extremely kind of Ralph Riggs to look out for me there and I enjoyed myself very much indeed. I found my holiday at Philadelphia a most helpful one to me physically, as I was a little tired from my flight from the coast. My illness--that is, my slight cold--was a nuisance but, otherwise, was unimportant, and I am almost entirely recovered now. My only fear was that I might be imposing myself a little more than was necessary on Ralph, but he at no time led me to feel that this was so.

I have reported in here, as you can see from the heading, and I find things very interesting indeed. The College, under Admiral Spruance, is rapidly rounding into tip top form--everyone is devoted to the Admiral--and all hands are working hard, rather than accepting the old idea that the College was for "gentlemen" only.

My own assignment is of extraordinary interest, and I am already digging into it. I am sure that my results, if they reflect my interest and enthusiasm, will be of great value to the Fleet and to the Nation. My Staff, although small, is interested and highly competent and I know that I am going to have a lot of fun with them.

I hope that the forecast concerning your possible new assignment will not come true if you don't desire it, and that you will be allowed to remain at Quarters M as long as you wish. However, you cannot blame the Secretary and others if they desire to move you into what they consider a more important position than your present one. Your reputation is growing in leaps and bounds and

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everyone recognizes your remarkable ability in many lines but more particularly in the line of association with other units and people. Here you excel, and it is for this reason that your friends in the Philippines desire you there as Ambassador. I can certainly subscribe to that one myself! But not for now!

I told Admiral Spruance and also Admiral Kalbfus about your successes. They were evidently delighted, although they both indicated that that was what they had expected would happen. Admiral Kalbfus went out of his way to extol you in most pleasing fashion. You should be most gratified! I was!

In closing, I want to thank you again for your thoughtfulness in asking me as your guest in Philadelphia and to let you know that I really enjoyed every moment of my stay. Naturally, it was a blow to meet the colds so that I could not see you as I had hoped, but it was my happiness just to say "hello" again, after our happy months in the Philippines.

For the future, I must request that you both take better care of yourselves because I want to see you up and around, and heading toward bigger things at all times. With warmest personal regards, I am, as ever,

Your Old Philippine Shipmate,

R.W. Bates
Commodore, U.S.N.

Vice Admiral J.L. Kauffman
Commandant, 4th Naval District
Philadelphia, Pa.

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20 September 1946

Dear Harry:

It was very pleasant to see you and Margaret again the other day, and I certainly enjoyed having lunch with you. It was a great disappointment to me that I found it necessary to leave so early for Philadelphia. As it turned out, it was not necessary at all because, when I arrived at Philadelphia, I was greeted by Ralph Riggs, who said that Admiral Kauffman was ill in the hospital with a heavy cold and Elsa herself was suffering slightly with one also.

I, therefore, became the guest of Riggs and found it necessary to remain in Philadelphia about four days as, in visiting Kauffman in the hospital, I had absorbed some of his bugs. In no time at all, I came down with a cold also, but, fortunately, it was localized in the nasal passages, with no temperature. The doctors told me that they did not want me to travel until it was improved, and that meant remaining longer in Philadelphia than I had expected. However, I enjoyed myself a lot, you may be sure, ill or not!

I certainly like your set-up down in Washington, and I think that in choosing you for President of the highest institution of learning, a wise choice was made. Everyone recognizes your ability as a Commander and as a Planner and, in addition, everyone realizes that your battle prestige is so high as to give you undoubted loyalty and respect, from everyone in your establishment. Naturally, I am highly interested in what you are doing, because I have always had the firmest belief in the necessity for higher education in the officer personnel, but, for a long time, such an idea was considered heretical among the vast portion of the younger officers. I have always thought that if we had run into heavier Japanese opposition at sea, the need for mental training would have been more evident to the many, than it actually appeared to be.

The Quarters which the Army supplied you are excellent, aren't they? Big brick houses with lofty ceilings lend themselves wonderfully to summer coolness, but whether they can be kept warm in the winter is something which you will have to tell me about later.

My job down here is exactly what I told you. Although the process is slow, I hope that we will eventually produce a product worthy of the War College and our own Naval Service. It is quite interesting, as you can imagine, to read the Japanese information upon the battles in which we were engaged, and to fit that in with what we know we did ourselves.

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Thanks very much for your many courtesies to me, and I do hope that when I get down there again, I shall have better luck in parking on the Hill doorstep than was afforded me last time.

As ever,

Your Old Friend

R.W. Bates
Commodore, U.S.N.

Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill
President, National War College
Washington, D.C.

CONFIDENTIAL

28 September 1946

Dear Jimmy:

Well, here I am back at the War College where I am Head of a Board to evaluate the major naval battles of the war. I am now on the Battle of the Coral Sea.

Some time ago, if I remember correctly, you told me that the large carrier task forces were formed because of the difficulty of protecting the striking forces of heavy surface ships--that the heavy ships needed air cover and, on the other hand, that the carriers needed surface protection, and their needs caused them to be merged. I want this information as soon as you can get it to me as I want to discuss Japanese covering for the Coral Sea and the above is of intense interest.

The Japanese convoy, coming south through Jomard Passage, had one carrier--the Shoho--with her. This Shoho was sunk by Admiral Fletcher's force. The Japanese covering force was at that time east of the Solomons--over 900 miles away. What were our reactions to having a lone carrier with a convoy, as above, or should the carrier have been differently located? What was our policy towards the location of covering forces for our own vessels?

It would be of interest to you to know that a Selection Board is meeting in November to select anywhere from 25 to 30 Rear Admirals. I had quite a talk with Admiral Denfeld about it, and the Admiral told me that it was all approved by the President and was designed to cover the inequities of promotion which had occurred because of Admiral King's personal choice system. It is to cover those classes senior to, and including, the Class of 1921. Thus the new promotion list should not include any new personnel, but rather those whom Admiral King chose to overlook. I certainly hope to see you on that list. As a matter of fact, I should like to be there myself, but as this is a young man's navy now, anybody over 20 seems to be obsolete.

The War College is going along in great swing, and the officers here have all been specially selected. I, personally, find it highly interesting, and it has considerable vitality. Admiral Spruance is an excellent President of the College and with the arrival of Admiral Hewitt to assist him, we will have two 4-star Admirals, one 2-star Admiral, and three 1-star Commodores guiding the upper destinies of the brain trust.

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I don't know what you plan to do when you come ashore from your good ship, but if you haven't anything lined up and would like a job in Newport, I would be glad to have you on my Board.

Newport is as charming as ever and the prices do not seem to be too exorbitant. I have my own apartment back at 12 Mt Vernon, and I am settling down for a reasonable stay. Please give my warmest regards to Admiral Kitts when you see him and as for yourself, keep your hat on straight and maintain that dignity which always characterized the chicken fancier. As ever,

Your Old Friend,

R.W. Bates
Commodore, U.S.N.

Captain James Carter, U.S.N.
USS LOS ANGELES
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

1 October 1946

Dear Cal:

Thank you for your letter of 20 September. It came in most handily, and we believe that you are right--that there was no report for T.G. 77.4, and we have so informed the historians.

You will be glad to learn that, from Japanese sources, we have discovered that the gunfire of the USS BENNION and the air attack from T.G. 77.4 was not entirely unsuccessful against those Japanese destroyers which attacked our mine group off Manila, as we were en route to Lingayen. As you will recollect, we did not allow you to launch a second heavy air attack as night was falling and we did not consider the expenditure of the planes justified. Admiral Kinkaid asked me at Lingayen why we had allowed the destroyers to escape, and I informed him that our objective was Lingayen beachheads and that we could not allow ourselves to be drawn into a night action with a couple of destroyers and possibly lose some of our ships when our means available was too low already. The Admiral said that he was delighted with this decision and that it was quite correct.

I am in receipt of the following information from the historians on this matter:

"As nearly as we can determine from Japanese sources, DEs MOMI and HINOKI sortied from Manila Bay on 5 Jan. 1945. Carrier planes sunk MOMI. Hinoki returned to Manila, was patched up, and raided Kinkaid's force 7 January. She was sunk by our DD gunfire.

"Some Jap sources refer to DE SUGI being damaged on 5 January and may have been with MOMI instead of HINOKI, but this weight of evidence is otherwise".

Therefore, we did succeed in sinking one of the destroyers--actually they were DEs--and apparently damaged the other so badly that she was sunk somewhat later. So our decision was sound, not only in theory but in fact.

I suppose I'll see you at the Army and Navy Game, which I hope to attend, if not earlier.

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Otherwise take care of yourself, and save yourself so that, should we need your services in battle within the next few years, they will be available. Best regards as always,

R.W. Bates
Commodore, U.S.N.

Rear Admiral C.T. Durgin, U.S.N.
Commander Naval Air Bases
11th Naval District
San Diego, California

4 October 1946

Dear Jack:

I've been wanting to write to you for some time, to tell you where I am now and to, at the same time, tell you the pride I felt when I read about you in Fortune Magazine. As I told you over the telephone, about a month and a half ago, I was slated for the War College, and I am here now in a highly interesting analysis job. How long the job will last is problematical, but I do not expect to be here when it is finally finished. I hope that you will see fit to put in an appearance in this area one of these days, if for no other reason, than to get away from the heavy load which I know you are bearing.

The article in Fortune Magazine plainly indicates your attention to your responsibilities as Chairman of the Board of the Gar-Wood Industries. In fact, the discussion about you in New York, and your representative in Detroit, was quite a laugh, but somebody told me, the other day, that Detroit was pretty near to New York for you, because you kept two private planes available for your needs. That looks to me like Sound Military Decision.

I had no idea of the importance of Fortune Magazine to the economic world, but I noticed, while visiting the Bohemian Grove, for their yearly blow, that many of the leading San Francisco businessmen had read the article about you in Fortune, and were quite interested in you. So all I had to do, to make the team, was to say: "He's my friend!"

I am going to Washington next week, and I hope to stop in New York one day, both ways, primarily to say "hello" to you and to Mr. Francis Baer, the Senior Vice-Chairman of the Bank of America, who is a very old friend of mine, and who will be staying at the Ambassador. I want you and Baer to know one another because you are both swell fellows, and you are both quite simple in your relations with others. You will be friends. Baer has just written me a letter and told me that he would be there and wanted to see me. In addition, I want to buy a new uniform, and I do not know whether my tailor has survived.

The Cowboy Pool Tournament is under way at the Reading Room, and you are very badly missed, particularly by me, as I used to like to beat you. When I first tried the game, after three and a half years away, I completely missed the ball, showing me that I had to start from scratch, but yesterday I beat Lord Camoys in

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a playful game, and I could see that I was improving. Camoys, by the way, is a perfectly charming Englishman.

I hope this letter finds you and Mrs. Bergen in excellent health. I think that I recollect that your tummy misbehaved a little out in the Western Pacific, and I hope that by now you have fully recovered. Take care of it!

With warmest personal regards, I am, as ever,

Your Old Pal

R.W. Bates
Commodore, U.S.N.

Mr. John J. Bergen
Hotel Pierre
Park Avenue
New York City, N.Y.

1115

14 October 1946

Dear Ralph:

This is merely a short note to ask how everyone is in your area. After arriving up here I wrote to you and to Reggie - also to my good friend, Kitty - but as I haven't heard a word from anyone, it is my fear that all the letters must have gone astray. Why this should be so I do not know but, as I had just come into the War College it is possible that the letters are adrift somewhere around here.

On the other hand, perhaps you did receive them and had not thought it necessary to reply, which is naturally your own privilege. I am so interested, however, in your family, and in Reggie's family, that I am taking the liberty of dropping another note to you with the hope that you will write back and tell me how they are. Naturally, I have a lot of regard for Kauffman and for his accomplishments during the war and for yourself and for your accomplishments.

Things up here are progressing very well. The work that we are doing is slow but highly interesting. However we are held back somewhat by the rate of translation of Japanese documents which is quite slow. We have to guide it with care. I am going to Washington on Wednesday and I will try and speed this up.

The weather here in Newport has been perfectly lovely, and, although a slight Fall chill is in the air, it is just enough to revitalize everyone. Things are going along gaily therefore in all fields. At the Reading Room they are playing Lawn Bowls and Bocci, an Italian game of bowls which is a great deal of fun, and the usual pool. I am now in the finals in pool with Lord Camoys, an Englishman who plays quite well, and it is my hope that our steadiness under fire will bring us final victory. We are not the best players, but we may be best under fire.

The social activities in Newport are progressing very well. I have been to a few of the parties and found my old friends had not forgotten me; that in itself, is a very fine thing and I, naturally, having a certain amount of vanity, enjoy it. Many of your old friends are still here and often ask about you in the Reading Room.

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I hope to be down for the Army and Navy game and will see you then. Admiral Kauffman has asked me to be his guest at several parties that he is going to give and I sincerely hope to be able to accept them. I will see you then, if not sooner.

Lastly, I trust that your son is showing continued improvement. I know how proud you are of him and how hopeful for his welfare. I feel that if all of us put in our share of prayer for his ultimate complete recovery that, perhaps, it will turn out that we have been heard. We shall all try!

With warmest personal regards to yourself and to Katherine to whom I hope you will give a cheery "Hello", I am, as ever,

Your old pal,

R. W. Bates
Commodore, U.S.N.

Rear Admiral Ralph Riggs
4th Naval District
Navy Yard
Philadelphia, Pa.

1117

21 October 1946

Dear Bobby:

This is merely a note to thank you very much for your kindness to me in giving me your time and in also loaning me your raincoat; both I appreciated very much.

I was interested in your discussions of the General Board. I understood you to say that the impetus for dissolving the General Board came from the Secretary. I was surprised, therefore, when later, in talking with Vice Admiral Hoover, I was informed by him that he had originated the idea. I thought that he said that the General Board wrote an article on their functions after the first decision had been rendered and this had reopened the discussion. Anyway, I personally think, as I told Admiral Hoover, that the General Board has a definite place, providing it is used. I still hope that it will be used.

Take care of yourself, and many thanks for everything.

With warmest personal regards, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. Bates,
Commodore, U.S.N.

Rear Admiral R.W. Hayler
General Board
Navy Department
Washington, D.C.

1118

21 October 1946

Dear Admiral:

It was a great pleasure for me to have a chance to talk to you for a few minutes concerning the Navy as a whole, the future of the General Board, and my own problems with this analysis that I am working on.

I have been laughing to myself at your comment that I would probably put more thoughts in the minds of the commanders than they actually had at the time, in view of the rapidity with which they had to act. I am not so sure that what you say is entirely so, because I think that the more successful commanders thought along sound lines, and, in making their estimates, followed some definite pattern.

We had at one time here, at the War College, as a two-weeks student, Mr. Roy Howard of the Scripps-Howard newspapers. Mr. Howard told me that when he had first come to the College he had thought that he did everything instantaneously without any real analysis, but after he had been here two weeks and had noted what we called logical thinking, he had had to admit, to his surprise, that he actually did think along similar lines, even though more rapidly than most people did. I haven't any doubt at all but that you thought the same way, and I know that Vice Admiral Fletcher told me of how many estimates he had had to make. In each case, of course, he was following a logical process. However, I do remember, as I told you on Friday, that one Admiral in particular told me that I had worded what he had done, better than he had thought of it. I sincerely trust that whatever I do here will succeed in at least accomplishing that.

I was interested in what you had to say about the General Board. I have always favored the General Board, as I like a separate agency with plenty of time and plenty of experience to pass upon matters of national importance. I thoroughly believe that the Secretary should use the General Board as advisory to himself. I must admit, however, that I agree with you that if the Board is not going to be used, it should be dissolved.

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I was sorry that I couldn't remain to talk with you longer. I would have been able to do so had the weather not looked bad, as it became necessary to cancel my flight which had already been arranged, and proceed north by rail.

Upon my arrival in New York, Jack Bergen invited me to a professional football game between the Dodgers and the Yankees. I had dinner with General Wild Bill Donovan, Larry McPhail, Dan Topping and some of the bigwigs in both baseball and football of the professional variety. One fellow at the dinner which was held at the Stadium Club--the Stadium Club is a club of 2500 members similar to the Jockey Club at a race track where the members have meals and drinks before and during the games--said, "Say, don't I know you? Didn't you have dinner with me at Samar when you came over to see Capt. Shoemaker." I said, Yes, that I did remember him and I also remembered that we had been photographed together." - to which he replied, "Right." - and further, that he not only had the picture but, strange as it may seem, he had just been looking at it. What a small world we live in!

I found the gentlemen above--none of whom I had known before--to be very friendly--their wives likewise--and all in all I saw a very good football game and I had a very nice evening.

I was very happy to see how well you were looking and to realize that your many years of outstanding performance both in and out of combat have in no way dimmed your initiative nor affected your appearance. You certainly look excellent.

With warmest personal regards, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. Bates,
Commodore, U.S.N.

V. Admiral J.H. Hoover
General Board
Navy Department
Washington, D.C.

1120

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

23 October 1946

Dear Admiral:

I have been in this area about a month now and I have seen many of your friends, all of whom ask about you and Betty with intense interest. If you never were a hero anywhere else in the world, you are here. Everyone has the utmost pride in your accomplishments, and they are all very proud to know you.

I had dinner with Mrs. Fitzsimmons the other day. She is still recovering from the loss of her husband for whom she evidently had a deep affection, and she told me that she was sincerely considering going out to visit you and Betty. I told her that she had better do it in a hurry as there was always a chance of you being changed, and your house and set-up was so charming, that it would be a crime not to see it. She is all wrapped up now with the elections, soon to be over, and she thinks that her Republican friends will do very well.

I wrote Denfeld a letter congratulating him upon his assignment to CincPac, in which I told him that I felt that it was too bad that he had not given you this assignment, as I had felt all along, and I knew that others felt with me, that your outstanding combat performances as well as lesser performances at Trinidad and Argentina, entitled you to this assignment. Besides, I told him, not in the letter, but personally, that you were thoroughly acquainted with the Pacific. I told him that he had a big job to finish in Washington and that you could well have taken the job of CincPac for a year or more out there, and that, he, Denfeld, could have had it after you. I received a nice note back from him in which he said he appreciated my letter and would liked to have finished out the tour at Eupers, but what had happened had happened.

I don't think that you have to worry about the Selection Board, as I don't think you will be on it. I was in Washington the other day on business and I tried to find out a little about it, and my information was that you probably were not on it, otherwise I would not write this now. I do know, not for publication, that Admiral Spruance is to be the head man, and Charlie Lockwood also, is on it. There are rumors of

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Admirals Kinkaid, Mitcher, and Hewitt being on it but they are only rumors and I have no guarantee that they are. However, I think that even these names should be treated confidentially, as the department does not, apparently, care to let out now who is to be on the Board at all, to avoid high pressuring some of the members. I have certainly hoped and shall hope, that you are on it and also Admiral Kinkaid, so that your wonderful command may have adequate representation. However, if you are, I haven't heard of it. As I told you before, this Board was designed--so Admiral Denfeld told me--to clear up the many inequities in the Pacific which had occurred because of the manner in which selection for flag officers had been made. He also told me, as did Admiral Conolly, that I was one of those entitled to be reconsidered. I hope other people feel that way. In the end, however, words from a Chief of Bureau are often quite different from the directive he issues, so whether I happen to be chosen or not will be partially determined by the directive issued to the Board.

The weather here in Newport is perfectly wonderful. I am enjoying myself considerably, although I miss my old friends of yesteryear.

Captain and Mrs. Paul Bastedo have bought the old W.S. Sims house on Catherine Street, and Mr. Robert Young of the C and O Railroad has purchased Oakland Farms, the Vanderbilt place. He did not desire the furniture at Oakland Farms, so Gus White is now conducting a very high-price auction there.

The Reading Room is in full tilt and I, with Lord Camoys, am to meet Mr. Bob Young and Mr. Frank Robinson in the finals of the Cowboy Pool Tournament this afternoon. I hope I win, but I don't feel that I am good enough to be in the finals yet. I had a few breaks which helped me along.

I made a speech yesterday--Navy Day speech--at Fall River, and it apparently went quite well. I didn't have any prepared speech but I used a few notes which, insofar as my method of speaking is concerned, served adequately.

I see around here quite frequently, the Douglasses, Bastedos, Chauncey Shackfords and the Castlemans. Freddie Holmes has purchased "The Castle" across from Gus White's house and is re-furnishing it. He is retired.

There is still great excitement around Newport with the hope that John Nicholas Brown may be the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and the papers have written him up quite a lot. So far, I understand, the President has made no comment.

Admiral Spruance is in excellent form and Admiral Hewitt has evidently reported for duty, but I have not yet seen him. He is reportedly here for medical treatment and any assistance he can give the War College.

With warmest personal regards to yourself and Betty, and many thanks for all you have done for me in the past, I am, as ever,

Your Old Friend,

R. W. Bates
Commodore, U.S.N.

Vice Admiral J.B. Oldendorf
Commandant, 11th Naval District
San Diego, Calif.

24 October 1946

Dear Jack:

This is merely to report that your former pool partner, in company with Lord Camoys, succeeded yesterday in winning the doubles pool tournament of the Reading Room of Newport, R.I. against Mr. Robert Young, the chairman of the C & O Railroad, and Mr. Frank Robinson, a New Yorker formerly a lieutenant commander in the Naval Reserve. The match was won solely on the Green Book, in which every effort was made by me to keep Mr. Young, who is far and away the best player in the Reading Room, from scoring, while Lord Camoys ran up more points than Frank Robinson.

I asked the Dr. Wilson, the former Episcopalian rector, and also a Catholic priest (name forgotten) to serve on my team and give me the benefit of their close association with the Creator, but when Mr. Young, on the "break", ran up 46 points, I fired both churchmen. However, immediately after that, both Camoys and I scratched 3 or 4 times losing a considerable number of points, so I invited the theological staff to rejoin my command, which they did. After that, of course, we won! Our victory was a great surprise, and was evidently entirely unexpected; however, the theory of the Green Book (SMD) still holds, to wit, that if you study your opponents and prepare a sound battle plan based on them and their abilities, and if you yourself have a reasonable ability in execution, your chance of success is high. I asked Mr. Young, who, by the way, is a wonderful sport and excellent loser, "Do you know how we defeated you?" To this he replied, "You Son of a Gun, I noted that you made every effort to make it impossible for me to make a shot, while at the same time rolling up a few for yourself." I said that was true, that I had been watching him for a week in practice and had noted where he seemed less able to make the more difficult shots. So there you have it!

Lord Camoys played a perfectly beautiful game after he got the strain off. At first he was under pressure and shot too fast, but suddenly he got his second wind and from that time on he was invaluable.

I cannot thank you too much for your kindness to me on Saturday in New York in asking me to the Stadium Club and in introducing me to such sporting celebrities as Donovan, MacPhail and Topping. I enjoyed sitting between Mrs. MacPhail and Mrs. Parker, but I regretted not meeting Mrs. Topping. She must be a lulu.

I had a very interesting time at the game. I thought, at first, that MacPhail was a little bit difficult but, after the game, he was most pleasant, and invited me to come back again, so I hope some day perhaps we can arrange another meeting.

I do hope with all sincerity that Mrs. Bergen is now on the way to a rapid recovery. She is a most courageous person and there is no doubt that her will to live through these long months of hospitalization and operations is due solely to her love for you and for her family. I know that you return this in kind. Needless to say, I was very moved at the long hours you take away from your business to see her. You will see that God in his own good time, which let us hope will be very soon, will return her home to you for good.

I like the Club Twenty-One, but I was a little distressed that the owner decided to sign my chit. I never like to run things that way. Thanks anyway.

Once again let me thank you very much for your friendship, and let me tell you how much I have appreciated knowing you, and in addition, how much I appreciate your remarkable business qualities. You always seem to keep ahead of the gang, which is the American way.

With warmest personal regards, I am,

Your Old Friend,

R.W.Bates,
Commodore, U.S.N

Mr. John J. Bergen
Hotel Pierre
Fifth Avenue
New York City

1125

7 Mr.

Dear John:

I was down in Washington the other day and dropped in to your office to see you, but unfortunately you were not available, and I had to return to Newport, and I missed you. I hope that you like your new assignment, and from what I hear, your subordinates are quite pleased with their new director.

As you perhaps know, we are endeavoring here to analyze the major battles of World War II, and at present we are puzzled about a relatively simple matter, but unfortunately not so simple because information about own forces seems to be harder to obtain than that about Japanese forces.

This is the question. At the time of the Coral Sea action TF 11 (Vice Adm. Fitch) was directed to join TF 17 (V. Adm. Fletcher). Vice Admiral Fletcher put out an operation order or plan in which these two carriers were combined into one Task Group. Can you supply me right away with the information as to whether the order to combine these two Task Forces into one Task Group came from CINCPAC or whether it was Fletcher's idea to combine them. In other words, what we want to know here is this-- was it satisfactory for CINCPAC to have TF 11 and TF 17 running around separately in the Coral Sea with both under command of Admiral Fletcher or were both of them to be combined in one Task Group of two carriers with only one commander, Admiral Fletcher. CINCPAC dispatches 142027, 220541 both of April, 1942 may clarify this matter.

With best regards to you and with hope that you will give me prompt reply on this even if you have to bother Admiral Fletcher, I am,

Sincerely yours,

R. W. Bates

Capt. John Heffernan
Director of Naval History
Navy Department
Washington, D.C.

1126

15 November 1946

Dear Billy:

I cannot begin to tell you the extreme satisfaction I experienced when the election returns indicated that you had won so handsomely over Will Rogers. Insofar as I am concerned, your election was very important to the State and to the Nation, because of some of the strange ideas apparently espoused by some of your opponents. I have seen you in action in the far Pacific and to a small degree in the Senate, and I have no doubt but that you will cast added luster on the title of Senator.

I am very friendly here with Mrs. Paul Fitzsimmons, who apparently knows you very well, and we celebrated your victory the other evening with great delight. Also I had quite a talk before the election with Henry Fletcher, who had evidently just come from the Coast, and he seemed at that time to feel that you were sure to be elected.

I know that you are very busy, and therefore have no time to answer this and I do not expect you to. However, I know that all of my family, and in particular, Jocelyn, worked hard for your election, and your success is their happiness. Take care of yourself and keep a friendly eye on your Navy!

With warmest personal regards, I am, as ever,

Your Old Friend,

R. W. Bates,
Commodore, U.S.N.

Senator William Knowland
c/o Mr. Joseph Knowland
Oakland Tribune
Oakland, California

1127

CONFIDENTIAL
7 December 1946

Dear Reggie:

I cannot thank you enough for the invitation to lunch which you and Elsa gave me last Saturday before the Army and Navy game. I enjoyed being there very much indeed and I was very happy to see a number of my old friends. It was very kind of you, also, to include my hostess, Mrs. Wear, and she enjoyed herself also. It appears that she is some sort of relative of Mr. Bush, and she and he were having a delightful time at the second table. Your party was, of course, an enormous success, and this was to be expected because of your long training in such matters. You and Elsa make a team most difficult to defeat, and I am glad that you number me as one of your friends. Certainly I always count on you.

The Army and Navy game was a wonderful exhibition of what a team can do when it is fully aroused and when it is adequately trained. Of course the Army was full of over-confidence, and this has a negative affect upon victory when carried to excess. As I watched the Army playing, I remembered what Knute Rockne had told his players one day when they were not doing very well in a game, viz. - show the other team your press clippings and that may put fear into them.

I was sorry to note the results of the Selection Board. Naturally, it wasn't what I had hoped for at all, but there it is and nothing more can be done about it. Admiral Kinkaid told me that there had been a most difficult situation for the Board as the number of Admirals that they were authorized to choose was but 14. All of the others were specified evidently by number. He further said that he was sorry, in my case, and that he thought that two more selections should be held from the same group. He or Admiral Denfeld told me that I was not to consider that I had been passed over by this Board. The presumption from this is that anybody around my time, in view of the very limited number of promotions available, was not considered, no matter how able or how outstanding his record. Admiral Denfeld spoke to me and told me that it had been his expectation and also that of Vice Admiral Connolly, as well as others, that I would most certainly be promoted. He further said that the result of the Board was very surprising to him because he felt that it had not carried out fully the directive of the President to go back and recover officers of outstanding service, who for some reason or other had been missed by the King panels.

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I told him that Admiral Kinkaid felt that the number of officers to be promoted and entitled to be promoted was far greater than the number allowed, and that at least two more selections should be made from that group. This he seemed to agree to, but whether it will be done or not, I don't know.

I have heard nothing from Admiral Spruance on the subject, although he looks at me and laughs, which may or may not mean something. He has talked to other officers though and told one, in particular, that I did not throw his weight around enough.

No matter what happens to me in the future, I want you to know I have always enjoyed my service with you and appreciate in every way your efforts in my behalf which though great, were evidently up against something apparently, at present, insurmountable. I should certainly like to know what that something is.

Please convey my warmest personal regards to Elsa and tell her that I am writing her a personal note of appreciation, but I have been somewhat bogged down with this battle I am working on and it is only today that I have felt a little free.

Take care of yourself, as we want you around with us for a long time. As ever,

Yours in Appreciation,

R. W. Bates
Commodore, U.S.N.

Vice Admiral J.L.Kauffman
Commandant, 4th Naval District
Philadelphia, Pa.

1129

9 December 1946

Dear Louis:

This is merely a note to thank you very much for your friendly and informative remarks made to me at Admiral Kauffman's before the football game. I still don't understand what happened, but my guess is that the Admirals felt limited to such a small number of line officers - Admiral Kinkaid said 14 - that it would be better to take the younger ones, even tho of little combat experience in positions of responsibility. You may have found some people who agree with this decision of the Board, but I haven't found one. There seems to be a feeling that the promise, made before this Board met, that it would recover "inequities" was in no way carried out. In view of the strange results, I have had many people, and some of these civilians, asking what the directive to the Board actually was. To that, of course, I cannot answer, as I do not know.

As regards to my own case, I can tell you freely that most of the officers who were eligible at the War College have told me that they felt that I was their number one choice, and a sure bet. Admiral Spruance has said nothing.

The other day a senior Rear Admiral not attached to Newport, said at a dinner, quote - You are certainly being treated in a most rugged fashion and I should like to know what it is all about - unquote. This, of course, I could not reply to because I have not the slightest idea of what is wrong.

Naturally, all of us around here are getting interested in what your plans are now for our future. Do you plan to have another Board with a different directive to insure that this matter will be adequately cleared up?

I know that you will enjoy your duty in Hawaii. Walter Dillingham is a good man to know and wields very great power. Jack Walker is a very nice fellow, but a far less political power than Walter. However, you will find that as Commander in Chief of the Fleet, you will be very much in demand in all ways, and I envy you the opportunity of serving your Flag in such an exalted position.

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It was very nice to meet Mrs. Denfeld again. I have no doubt that she is as proud of your success as your many friends are.

With warmest personal regards, I am, as ever,

Very sincerely yours,

R. W. Bates
Commodore, U.S.N.

Vice Admiral Louis Denfeld
Chief of Naval Personnel
Navy Department
Washington, D.C.

1131

10 December 1946

Dear Wes:

I have been East three months now and have had a chance to shake down in my new job, and I find it highly interesting. It is considerably harder in many ways than I had anticipated because there is pressure on us to get something out. However, you cannot pressure this type of work as it becomes very difficult to weigh and analyze multi-varied information in a matter of moments. It is much easier to do that on a bridge, than it is in this room.

My physical condition remains about the same excepting that I notice that if I walk up a flight of stairs I find myself showing signs of a shortness of breath which is a little unusual to me, as I had not noticed it before. In fact, it was remarked upon in Washington, the other day, when I was there. Outside of this, I feel fairly well. Sometimes I seem to get headaches and wake up at night for no reason, but that is possibly from too much paper work. I took an annual physical the other day and I have heard nothing more from it, so I presume that I was passed. The physical examination covered everything that you gave me, and so far as I know, I did reasonably well excepting that my blood pressure started out 170 which seemed to surprise the doctor. I groused at him and told him that, in my mind, his machine was no good, as my blood pressure was rarely ever that high. He finally gave me 128 over 90, whereas at Mare Island I had 130 over 80. I don't know what my electrocardiograph showed.

The Selection Board came out as you know, and to my disappointment, but not surprise, I was not on it. Why, I do not know, because Admiral Denfeld has told me, since the Board's report, that I was supposed to be on it and he couldn't imagine my getting the run-around like this. Admiral Kinkaid was a member of the Board and told me he was sorry but they could only choose 14 and felt it better to choose them the way they did--that is, the younger ones. He also said I was not to consider that I had been passed over at all, which means, I suppose, that I wasn't even considered.

I see that my good friend Swanson has been elected to the Chief of Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, for which assignment, in view of his political connections, he is probably well fitted, but whose medical ability does not exceed that of many other captains

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even better qualified than he for this assignment. The Washington team is still in the saddle, and the boys who fought the War are once again pushed out of the picture.

When I was in Washington I talked you up very highly and told them that I thought you should be made a Rear-Admiral before you retired. They were very complimentary about you, and that is all I know. However, you are too damn good to be promoted. The best are certainly not being advanced.

We have had a remarkably temperate winter here to date. The winter has varied around 50 degrees, and I am not even wearing a coat. New England, however, cannot touch California in any way, at this season of the year. The trees are bleak with no leaves, the fields are dead, the women all muffled--no wonder people rejoice when spring comes again. I will have to admit, in defense of New England, however, that the fall here is magnificent. The radiant, ruddy hues of the leaves, as nature changes them from green to the myriad hues of death, catch the eye and hold it, and make one wonder why the death of floral life should be so beautiful, whereas the death of human life is so sombre.

I miss very much not coming to your home to have my afternoon snort with you and your family. I also miss, thoroughly, the wonderful vegetables I plucked from your garden. I have no doubt that my appearance today is in a large part, due to similar kindly ministrations on the part of yourself and your beloved wife. That Margot is quite a girl, and I am very fond of her!

I don't know how much longer I will be in the Navy. I have written to Admiral Denfeld to ask him what the chances are for me and for others, in view of the announced policy of "boys" in places where "men" should be. Certainly, if I am going out I want to get a physical retirement, as I feel that I am entitled to it, in view of my medical record which, in the end, may be what defeated me before the Board, although nobody has told me anything. What do you suggest in this regard? I have not as yet spoken to Captain Turville who commands the hospital here, and I don't choose to do so until after I hear from you and after I hear from Admiral Denfeld.

Take care of yourself, old friend, and tell Margot I appreciate the way she is taking care of you also! As ever,

Your Old Pal,

R.W.Bates
Commodore, U.S.N.

Capt. Wesley Ross
Mare Island, Calif.

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